

City of Benbrook Annual Report 2013

A Message from City Council

This annual report marks the seventh consecutive year Benbrook has provided a comprehensive update on the state of our City. As our customers/citizens, you have clearly and consistently expressed your expectations for good governance. Among your directives, three categories stand out as most important to the community: quality-of-life, financial stewardship, and government transparency.



The year 2013 marks an unprecedented year of growth and opportunity for our city, and we are pleased to provide this report for your review.

Quality of Life

For most of us, quality-of-life means living in a community that is clean and safe, with opportunities for affordable housing, quality education, and access to healthcare, shopping, and recreation.

In 2013, Benbrook citizens participated in the National Citizen Survey, conducted by the National Research Center (NRC). This statistically-valid survey offers our citizens an opportunity to rate the quality-of-life they experience in our community. This survey, combined with the market research we embarked upon in 2012, offers a fairly comprehensive picture of citizen satisfaction.

Based on these measurements, Benbrook consistently ranks as a national leader in citizen satisfaction with municipal service delivery, and with our community overall: 95% of Benbrook respondents believe Benbrook is a “good” or “excellent” place to live; 94% judge quality-of-life in Benbrook as “good” or “excellent”; and the overall impression Benbrook citizens have of City employees ranked #1 nationally among 358 jurisdictions.

(Continued on page 2)

“Benbrook offers a consistently strong financial profile, supported by strong management practices.”
— *Standard and Poor's*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Message from City Council	1-2
Awards/Recognition	3
Financial Summary	4-5
Public Safety	6-7
Benbrook Economic Development Corporation	8
Benbrook Boulevard Campaign	9
Public Investments.....	10
Volunteerism	11



Benbrook has been recognized with several “Voice of the People” awards for service delivery (see ‘Awards’ on page 3). This prestigious award belongs to Benbrook citizens.

Benbrook’s unwavering focus remains on providing the best quality-of-life, at the least possible cost. Toward that goal, in 2013 Benbrook maintained the property tax rate of 65.75 cents per \$100 valuation, while enhancing services and community investment.

In 2013, work was completed on the expansion/renovation of the Benbrook Fire Station. This project greatly enhanced the station’s appearance and, more importantly, its capacity to meet the public safety needs of our community (see ‘Public Safety’ on page 7). For the upcoming year, the much-anticipated expansion of Benbrook Boulevard/US 377 will begin in earnest. Through strong partnerships with other organizations, Benbrook is prepared to meet the challenges of this significant growth project (see ‘Building a Better Benbrook Boulevard’ on page 9).

In summer 2013, over 300 people filled seats and lined the walls of the Benbrook Public Library to watch a community premier screening of “Once Upon a Time in Benbrook”, a history video. The gathering brought together area residents, present and former, who enjoyed reminiscing and sharing stories of our shared history.

Community volunteerism was strong in 2013. Many volunteers joined in efforts to improve our city and serve the community (see ‘Volunteerism’ on page 11). We cannot overstate how these commitments from our citizens not only save taxpayer dollars, but raise community spirit, and leave an indelible mark for future generations.

Financial Stewardship

Honoring a core value of the organization, Benbrook funded the fire station expansion/renovation project with cash reserves, rather than issuing debt (see ‘Financial Summary’ on pages 4-5). Our organizational

commitment to operate in a lean, responsive, and financially sustainable way offers us flexibility in funding decisions, and proves to be a superb business model.

Building on years of careful and strategic financial planning, the payoff became clear late in the year. Benbrook was informed in December 2013 that Standard and Poor’s (S&P) raised Benbrook’s credit rating by two slots, from an ‘AA-’ to an ‘AA+’. This significant upgrade demonstrates what S&P provided in their analysis, “Benbrook offers a consistently strong financial profile indicated by its very strong budgetary flexibility and liquidity, supported by strong management practices.” We feel confident that our philosophy of responsible financial stewardship sets us apart, and we take seriously our role as financial trustees.



Transparency

For us, engaging our citizens means we strive to continually improve avenues to educate

and inform, while providing tools for citizens to voice concerns, ideas, and suggestions. In this effort, the City unveiled a completely redesigned website in 2013. We believe the website is a user-friendly tool for customers to quickly access helpful, relevant, and timely information.

In addition, the City continues to provide information through the bi-monthly Benbrook Community Newsletter, social media, the Government Access Channel (Charter Cable 27, and soon on AT&T U-verse channel 99), the Benbrook Visitor’s Center, newspaper items, and this Annual Report. Our hope is that this effort enhances your government experience and offers transparency in municipal operations.

The year brought challenges and opportunities that we believe are leading us on a path to an even brighter future. The City of Benbrook strives to make each citizen feel like a valued customer. We earn your business through your choice to live, work, and play in Benbrook.

Thank you for allowing us to serve.

Benbrook City Council

Awards/Recognition

In 2013, the City of Benbrook received or maintained various awards and recognition for exemplary municipal services. These awards belong to the citizens of Benbrook and are a point of community pride.

Voice of the People Award for Excellence

The City of Benbrook has been awarded several 'Voice of the People' Awards. These awards are announced each year by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the National Research Center to jurisdictions with the highest rated municipal services according to a representative sample of their own residents.

Certificate of Achievement for Planning Excellence

As one of only 24 Texas cities, Benbrook was awarded the 2013 Certificate of Achievement for Planning Excellence from the Texas Chapter of American Planning Association. This award recognizes cities that demonstrate professional planning standards that aide in economic development and community image.

Recognized Law Enforcement Agency

The Benbrook Police Department is a "Recognized Law Enforcement Agency" by the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Recognition Program. Benbrook was the 36th law enforcement agency in Texas, and the first in Tarrant County, to earn this coveted award.

Insurance Services Office Rating

Through an exhaustive inspection/survey, the Benbrook Fire Department earned an improved Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, which is often considered in the calculation of homeowner insurance premiums. Based on individual policies, potential savings to Benbrook property owners is estimated at \$400,000. This improved rating places Benbrook in the top 17% of cities in Texas, and top 7% nationally.

Benbrook is a "Texas Certified Scenic City" The Scenic City Certification Program supports and recognizes Texas municipalities that implement high-quality scenic standards for public roadways and public spaces, with the long-term goal of improving the image of all cities. At the time of recognition, Benbrook was one of 11 Texas cities to receive Gold/Platinum status.

Benbrook is recognized as a 'StormReady' community. The National Weather Service presents this recognition to communities that demonstrate severe weather readiness through advanced planning, education, and awareness. Less than 1% of cities in the United States receive this recognition.

Distinguished Budget and Excellence in Financial Reporting

For the 29th consecutive year, Benbrook received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) award for Distinguished Budget Presentation for its annual budget. Similarly, Benbrook also received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.



Financial Summary

For 2013, Benbrook maintained the property tax rate at 65.75 cents per \$100 valuation. One and one-half cents are allocated towards the payment of debt; the other 64.25 cents finances general operations. As in previous years, Benbrook funded capital projects with available cash instead of issuing debt.

Operating Fund expenditures for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013 totaled \$18,562,262 – including the use of \$2,164,904 in reserves for the expansion of the Fire Station. Netting out the planned use of General Fund reserves for this capital project, the City ended the fiscal year with a positive operating balance of \$736,312. Public Safety expenditures represented 51% of total operating expenses.

Total revenues for the 2012-13 fiscal year were \$17,133,670; General Fund revenue in the amount of \$16,020,686 was 100.31% of the budget projection. Property taxes accounted for 62% of total revenue collected. Sales tax revenue decreased by approximately 1.8%.

The City retained a strong credit rating of 'Aa3' from Moody's and was awarded a rating double upgrade from Standard and Poor's from 'AA-' to 'AA+' in 2013. These ratings are indications of the private sector's view of Benbrook's solid financial condition and future prospects. The City's sound credit rating results from Benbrook's ample reserves, proven financial controls, and professional staff.

For the 29th consecutive year, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recognized Benbrook with its Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the City's annual financial report. Benbrook again received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for excellence in municipal budgeting from GFOA.

In September 2013, City Council adopted the 2013-14 budget, based on a continued property tax rate of 65.75 cents. A summary of the revenues and expenditures approved by City Council are depicted in the charts on the following page.



Operating Funds

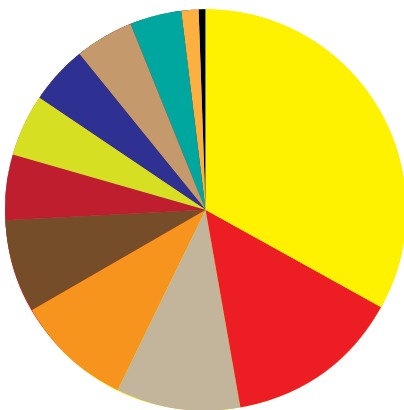
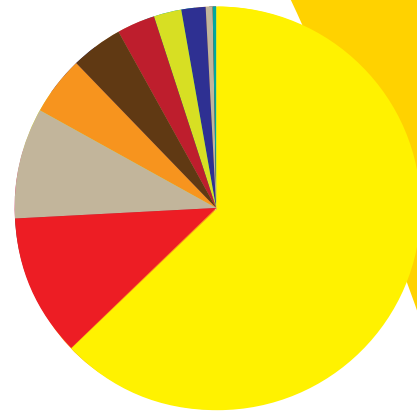
2013 - 2014 Budget

(October 1, 2013 - September 30, 2014)

Revenues by Source Budget 2013-2014 % of Budget

Property Taxes	\$10,462,968	62.84%
Sales and Other Taxes	1,918,581	11.52%
Franchise Fees	1,470,000	8.83%
Service Charges	796,200	4.78%
Fines and Forfeitures	668,000	4.01%
Transfers	542,104	3.26%
Revenue from Other Agencies	365,000	2.19%
Licenses and Permits	305,300	1.83%
Use of Money and Property	100,000	0.60%
Other Revenue	22,500	0.14%

Total \$16,650,653 100.00%



Expenditures Budget 2013-2014 % of Budget

Police	\$6,192,308	33.30%
Fire and Ambulance	2,597,451	13.97%
General Government	1,868,037	10.05%
Transfers*	1,750,000	9.41%
Public Works	1,396,368	7.51%
Debt Service	1,007,550	5.42%
Public Services	911,527	4.90%
Staff Services	908,240	4.88%
Parks and Recreation	864,898	4.65%
Community Development	785,644	4.22%
Municipal Court	217,316	1.17%
Code Compliance	96,891	0.52%

Total \$18,596,230 100.00%

* There are three planned transfers from General Fund reserves: (1) \$200,000 to the Capital Asset Replacement Account to begin re-building this reserve fund that is used to purchase major pieces of equipment such as ambulances, fire trucks, street sweepers, and other high-dollar items; (2) \$1,500,000 to the Core Value Fund for the utility relocation phase of the Benbrook Boulevard project; and (3) \$50,000 for a park in South Benbrook.

Public Safety

The men and women of the Benbrook Police and Fire Departments work daily to serve and protect the citizens of Benbrook. Their dedication, specialized training, response times, and professional demeanor result in exceptional public safety for our community. Both departments are recognized with the National Voice of the People Award for Exceptional Service.

Police Department

The Benbrook Police Department provides patrol and criminal investigation services, crime prevention and education, animal control services, community volunteer programs, and community outreach. Recognized with numerous awards for exceptional municipal services (see 'Awards' on page 3), the Benbrook Police Department is a progressive, service-oriented law enforcement agency.

For 2013, there was a slight increase in crime in the city. There were a total of 537 Part I crimes, up from 490 reported in 2012. The bulk of Part I crimes in Benbrook represent theft and vehicle burglaries. Crime rates in Benbrook remain lower than most Tarrant County communities, and the department is placing renewed emphases on crime prevention strategies and education, as part of a larger plan to reduce crime.

Police Officer recruitment efforts are a high priority. As a nationally recognized department for exceptional service, priority is placed on recruiting top-notch police officers who exhibit qualities that mirror those of the department. The department is expected to continue a robust recruitment campaign into 2014.

Chief James Mills notes, "Benbrook offers an officer a solid career and enviable benefits. We welcome applicants who have a strong desire to serve our community with character and integrity."

For 2013, the Patrol and Criminal Investigation Sections logged 290,207 miles and responded to 14,185 calls for police service. Average

response time was 2.55 minutes per call.

Vehicle accident investigations totaled 360, slightly up from the 351 accidents of 2012. Accidents included 225 minor accidents (with no injuries) and 135 major accidents resulting in injuries. A total of 194 persons were injured. There was one fatality accident during 2013. The department remains committed to reducing accidents through directed traffic enforcement. During the year, officers issued a total of 6,934 citations.

A total of 1,074 arrests were made, an increase of 7 from the 1,067 arrests in 2012. Arrests included 910 adults and 164 juveniles.

Police Department personnel attended a total of 2,320 hours of specialized and advanced training. The Communications Section (Police and Fire 911 operations) dispatched 19,724 calls for service during the year.

For 2013, members of the Citizens on Patrol program logged a total of 2,236 hours of volunteer service. They logged 12,476 miles and filed 354 reports.

In 2013, the Benbrook Police Department received overall service ratings that rank #1 nationally out of 399 jurisdictions.



Benbrook Police Department

1080 Mercedes Street
Non-emergency
phone number: 817-249-2752
2013 Average
Response Time: 2.55 minutes

Benbrook Fire Department

528 Mercedes Street

Non-emergency phone number:
817-249-1727

2013 average response times:

5.9 minutes in the city
(improved by 0.2 seconds)

11.8 minutes to the county
(improved by 0.1 seconds)

Fire Department

The Benbrook Fire Department is charged with preserving and protecting lives and property from fire and other disasters. The Fire Department fights fires, performs rescue operations, controls hazardous spills and leaks, promotes fire prevention through education, conducts annual fire inspections of Benbrook businesses, and enforces fire codes.

In addition, the Fire Department furnishes Emergency Medical Services (EMS/ambulance service), providing emergency medical treatment and transportation of sick and injured persons. Personnel also teach First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) classes to the community, as well as conduct special courses to train residents in life-saving techniques.

The City of Benbrook Fire and EMS Department serves the community with 16 full-time, 21 Auxiliary City Fire Support Unit members, and one volunteer. Fire Department personnel inspected a total of 249 businesses, spent approximately 305 hours on fire prevention education, and spent 2,287 combined hours in training. During fiscal year 2013, Fire and EMS Divisions responded to a total of 3,091 calls for service.

The EMS Division responded to 2,226 calls, a 9.1 percent increase from the 2,206 calls in 2012. A total of 1,615 patients were transported to area hospitals.

During the year, the Fire Division responded to 610 calls, with a total property fire loss of \$1,435,800. Calls requiring both Fire and EMS services totaled 255, an increase from 248 calls in 2012.

In May 2013, the community celebrated the Benbrook fire station expansion with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The facility was originally built in 1980, and for many years operated solely with volunteer firefighters when needed. As the department staff and the community have grown, so have facility requirements.

To better serve the community, the expansion and renovation project provided new living quarters, a dayroom, and a kitchen for round-the-clock staff. Also, additional critical apparatus bay support spaces were added, as well as a training room, emergency operations center, and administrative offices.

In 2013, the Benbrook Fire Department received overall service ratings that rank #11 nationally out of 326 jurisdictions.



Benbrook Economic Development Corporation

The Benbrook Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) was formed in 1995, after a vote of Benbrook citizens approved a half-cent sales tax to fund the corporation. BEDC is a “Type B” sales tax organization with the legislated ability to fund a number of projects intended to increase economic activity within the City. BEDC may fund manufacturing and industrial development, and may pay for land, buildings, equipment, facilities, targeted infrastructure, and improvements for development to enhance quality-of-life within the community.

The seven members of the board of directors are appointed by Benbrook City Council, each serving two-year terms.



The BEDC reports that businesses opening in 2013 include Chisholm Dental office on Mercedes Street, DeGrasse and Ratliff Eye Center

at Vista Way, Benbrook Dental in leased space on Benbrook Boulevard, World Finance Corporation in Benbrook Plaza, and construction is underway for a new Dr. William Whittle dental office on Mercedes, a strip center immediately west of the Walmart drive on Mercedes, as well as a car wash on Benbrook Boulevard, immediately north of Compass Bank. A New York Pizza and Sub has opened at Benbrook Plaza.

The BEDC has extended the first right of refusal option to Cornerstone Diversified Consultants to purchase approximately 88,000 square feet of retail land for anticipated development of a 17,050-square foot, Class “A” retail space at 8501 Benbrook Boulevard, south and east of Starbucks. Plans are currently under review by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for an ingress/egress drive from the IH-820 frontage road.

BEDC attended the International Council of Shopping Centers Texas Idea Exchange in November, in a targeted marketing effort to recruit retail and business development in

Benbrook. Among the businesses being sought were tenants for the vacant Albertson’s and Brookshire’s grocery stores, both of which closed in 2012. BEDC continues to work with the property management teams to locate tenants for the vacant buildings, focusing efforts to recruit smaller grocers to the area. The BEDC is also working with owners, developers, and property managers on Camp Bowie West, Brookside Addition, Team Ranch, Whitestone Ranch, Benbrook Plaza, and other vacant properties that are available for sale or lease.

BEDC goals include increasing total non-residential assessed property value by 5% annually. In 2012, that goal was exceeded with a 14.6% increase. For FY 2013, the goal was not met, with a reported decline of 2.8% from the previous year.

BEDC is also tasked with drafting redevelopment plans for select commercial areas within the city. Progress on these projects include:

(1) In an effort to improve infrastructure for future development, BEDC negotiated with landowners to make way for the extension of Winbrook Drive and Benbrook Parkway, north of IH-20. As part of those negotiations, BEDC acquired deeds to approximately 12 acres of land west of Winscott Road, and north of IH-820. BEDC received rights-of-way and easements to facilitate infrastructure projects.

(2) As highlighted in the ‘Building a Better Benbrook Campaign’ on the following page, the BEDC is working closely with a marketing firm to manage the community impact of the Benbrook Boulevard/US 377 expansion project. In addition, BEDC has budgeted funds to assist local business owners with the necessary relocation of utilities along the corridor.

Members of the BEDC Board of Directors have adopted an aggressive Strategic Plan and Budget for FY2013-14 and are working to improve the marketability of Benbrook as well as public recognition of the BEDC. Funds are being directed to infrastructure improvements on Benbrook Boulevard as well as the northeast quadrant of Winscott Road and IH-820.

Building a Better Benbrook Boulevard Campaign

Benbrook Boulevard/US 377, maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is Benbrook's central business corridor. It was once known as State Highway 10, and has served travelers for decades. The highway was commissioned in 1930, and in 2000, Benbrook City Council approved an ordinance naming a portion of US 377, "Benbrook Boulevard." Traffic demands on this busy roadway warrant the expansion of portions of the corridor to meet the growing needs of our region.

The 'Building a Better Benbrook Boulevard' campaign is a targeted effort to inform and engage the community during the Benbrook Boulevard/US 377 expansion project. Working in partnership with the Benbrook Economic Development Corporation (BEDC), the campaign was crafted by LComm Marketing and Public Relations. The marketing team activated a website, BenbrookBoulevard.com, and initiated a social media presence as part of their efforts to inform and educate.

The campaign focuses on sustaining the businesses in and around Benbrook Boulevard by providing status updates, encouraging shoppers to continue to support the local economy, publishing monthly newsletters, and by meeting with local community groups to share project information.

The expansion project covers the stretch of US 377 between Winscott/Lakeway, north to I-20/Loop 820. It will include the addition of two lanes, a median, and turn lanes along the approximately 13 miles of highway. The relocation of utilities is currently underway, and is expected to be completed by the end of first quarter 2014. TxDOT is expected to begin road construction in 2014, and will stage the work in three phases. Because traffic flow and access to businesses during construction is a high priority, only one phase of work will be underway at any given time, allowing continued access to businesses along the corridor. The \$22 million project is projected to take over two years to complete.

For more information, contact Lydia Guajardo Rickard at (817) 737-8388 or lgrickard@lcommmarketing.com.



Public Investments 2013

As a citizen of Benbrook, your tax dollars are used to invest in public projects such as parks, streets, drainage projects, and public buildings that serve the entire community. In 2013, several infrastructure and improvement projects were completed and several more are in various stages of planning. The following lists public investments and the status of each:

Parks

- Hike and Bike trail along the north side of Winscott Road, from Sproles Drive to Benbrook Boulevard/US 377 (completed).
- Hike and Bike trail along the south side of Winscott Road, from Beach Road to the Benbrook Community Center/YMCA (completed).
- Construct a Hike and Bike trail from the Benbrook Community Center/YMCA to the Dutch Branch Athletic Complex parking lot (anticipated for 2014).



- Construct a neighborhood park in South Benbrook (anticipated for 2014).

Streets/Thoroughfares

- In cooperation with the Benbrook Public Library, construct a sidewalk along the north side of Mercedes Street from Winscott Road to the library (completed).
- Construct an alleyway between Wade Hampton Street and Usher Street (project is being designed; construction is anticipated to begin spring 2014).
- Pave the alleyway from Usher Street towards Benbrook Boulevard/US 377 (project is being designed; construction is anticipated to begin summer 2014).
- Extend Benbrook Parkway and Winbrook Drive to accommodate potential future economic

development (project is being designed; construction is anticipated to begin spring 2014).

- Texas Department of Transportation to expand Benbrook Boulevard/US 377 (utility relocation work is underway; construction is anticipated to begin summer 2014. The City of Benbrook is providing matching funds in the amount of \$2,836,329 toward the expansion project, plus utility relocation and landscape/improvement costs of approximately \$4 million).
- Continue partnership with Tarrant County to implement the annual asphalt overlay program, covering approximately three miles of roadway (anticipated for 2014).
- Texas Department of Transportation to re-construct RM 2871 from south of the railroad tracks to Benbrook Boulevard/US 377 (anticipated for 2014).
- Texas Department of Transportation to construct a traffic signal at the intersection of Jerry Dunn Parkway and RM 2871 (anticipated for 2014).

Drainage

- Construct drainage system on Bryant Street to minimize potential flooding (project is being designed; construction is anticipated to begin spring 2014. This project is funded through the Stormwater Utility fund).

Public Buildings

- Expansion and renovation of the Benbrook Central Fire Station (completed).



Volunteerism

Making a Difference...

Benbrook has always been fortunate to have dedicated community members willing to volunteer to improve the community. The commitment, creativity, and hard work of local volunteers is invaluable to the success of community programs, projects, and special events. Benbrook enjoys the benefit of active parent and teacher involvement in school functions, homeowner association members that work to improve their neighborhood, church groups, school groups, and individuals that meet a need in the community through the Compassion-Based code compliance program, and hundreds of citizens that participate in the Spirit of Christmas program.

From the all-volunteer passion of 4 PAWS members working toward adoption of homeless pets, to the families that sign on to pick up litter at the annual Trash Bash event, to citizens that help keep us safe working as Citizens on Patrol, our residents can be counted on to show up and make a difference. Volunteers work to preserve our history through membership on the Benbrook Historical Society, and volunteer support helps make the annual Heritage Fest and Relay for Life events such a success.

The City of Benbrook appreciates these efforts, and has come to count on the spirit of volunteerism that is unique to Benbrook.

In 2013, two significant volunteer projects were completed:

- In May, as part of their One Day service program, Highridge Church volunteers cleaned, raked, repaired fencing, trimmed trees, and painted the Benbrook Animal Shelter. Tapping into individual talents, project organizers lead the group to transform the shelter in a one-day project that promises to brighten the shelter for years to come.
- In September, Mayor Dittrich presided over a dedication ceremony honoring three local girl scouts, Sarah Lindsay, Sarah Guenther, and Megan Metcalf, who chose to spend a good part of their summer researching, planning, and constructing the Benbrook cemetery directory and corresponding section markers as their Gold Award project. With the monetary and volunteer support of dozens of community members, this project is a testament to community spirit.



**Thank you to all
who serve our
community!**



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Benbrook, Texas 76126-0569

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City of Benbrook **Annual Report** 2013



City Council

Jerry Dittrich, Mayor
Charlie Anderson, Place 2
Larry Marshall, Place 3
Rickie Allison, Place 4
Jim Wilson, Place 5
Mark Washburn, Place 6
Ron Sauma, Place 7

City Hall

817-249-3000

City Manager
City Secretary
Community Development
Public Services
Budget/Purchasing
Finance
Code Compliance
Marketing/Visitor's Center
Municipal Court

Police Department

817-249-2752

(Administration)

817-249-1610

(Dispatch)

Fire Department

817-249-1727

**Benbrook Economic
Development Corporation**

817-249-6990



Get the free mobile app at
<http://gettag.mobi>

The City of Benbrook now uses Quick Response (QR) code technology for use with smart phones and other camera-enabled mobile devices.

To learn more, go to
www.cityofbenbrook.com
or scan the QR code above.

Benbrook City Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:30 PM at the City Hall Council Chambers, 911 Winscott Road.

Visit us on the web at **www.benbrook-tx.gov**

